

Dear Senator Moore

Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I write to express my concern about the above bills. I understand that these bills will enable Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium support for midwives providing care for women to give birth in hospital.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable however to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement. By doing this Australia is totally out of step with nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand.

These nations support the rights of women to choose homebirth and fund a registered midwife through their national health scheme. In New Zealand and the U.K women have a legislative right to choose homebirth.

The intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. I believe this to be an unintended consequence and ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

I have personally had three homebirths and would be devastated to imagine that this safe and wonderful opportunity was not available to other women, including one day my daughters and daughter-in-laws. Women deserve the right to chose the place where they wish to birth their baby.

Excluding homebirth as a legitimate and legal option will drive women and their caretakers underground resulting in unsafe practice for all.

Please don't deny women the right to chose homebirth. How our babies come into the world is one of our most precious gifts to them and the people they will become.

Yours sincerely

Cindy Scott